

REGULAR MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
January 22, 2007

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Clouette, Haddad, Hawkins, Koehn, Paterson, Paulhus, Redding, Schaefer
Absent: Blair

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hawkins moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2007 meeting.
Motion so passed.

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Paterson requested a moment of silence in memory of Carlee Wines . Ms. Wines was the young UConn Student who was killed as a result of a hit and run accident over the weekend. The Mayor requested those present to keep her family in their thoughts.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Lawrence Armstrong, 18 Dunham Pond Road, expressed his concern regarding the proposed parking area for the Dunham Pond Trail. According to the plans, which are currently before the Open Space Committee, the parking area will be about 90' from his front door. He asked that the parking be moved farther away.
Mayor Paterson said that she would ask staff to look at the issue.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

1. Hunting Lodge Road Walkway/Bikeway

Tim Veillette, Project Director, described the proposed Hunting Lodge Road Walkway/Bikeway. In response to a concern previously expressed Mr. Veillette said that he continues to look at options that would narrow the crosswalk at the intersection of North Eagleville and Hunting Lodge Road. The plans have been adjusted as a result of conversations with some of the homeowners. One of the main concerns in the planning of the walkway was the impact to the property owners and concern for the preservation of some of the large trees along the road. The next step will be to talk to each homeowner individually to obtain easements.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

2. Community/campus Relations

Matthew W. Hart, Town Manager, reported that the interviews for the Director of

the Center for Off Campus Services are continuing and the final candidates will be meeting with UConn and Town officials.

The Campus Community Partnership is focusing much of its efforts on the work of subcommittees. The Town Manager serves on the Committee to recommend guidelines for the new director and will work to update the local guide. Kevin Grunwald, Social Service Director, serves on the Committee, which is charged with promoting the activities of the Partnership.

Mayor Paterson reported that she has been contacted by National Public Radio regarding participating in an open forum on campus/community relations.

3. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

The Town Manager reported that the Master Plan is underway.

4. Issues Regarding the UConn Landfill

Rob Miller, Eastern Highlands Health District Director, responded to questions from Council members regarding the most recent correspondence relating to the UConn Landfill. He stated that most of the concerns were in reference to the monitoring bedrock wells where there is a history of the suspect chemicals. Therefore, it is not uncommon that these levels would be seen and they are probably included in the mediation plan. Mr. Miller will confirm.

Concern was also expressed regarding the level of E. coli after storm activity reported in the Storm Water Sampling Report. Mr. Miller commented that increases in bacteria associated with storm events is not unusual but he will contact UConn to see if these counts are higher than they should be. UConn is trying to identify a source point. More will be known after the consultant's report is concluded.

Ms. Koehn questioned the effect of this storm drainage water on her neighbor's, the Schweppes, well. Mr. Miller reported that their well is a dug well, which is easily susceptible to the effects of surface water contamination. It is not clear whether storm drain runoff or watershed runoff is the source of the problem.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

5. Meeting with State Legislators

Mayor Paterson welcomed State Senator Don Williams and State Representative Denise Merrill to the meeting.

Senator Williams identified energy, health care cost and access, jobs, and education as priority items on this year's agenda. His emphasis will be on health care and energy because if these issues are not addressed he is concerned that the onward progress of the economy will be threatened. Representative Merrill is working with a group of legislators who are exploring new approaches to tax issues especially property taxes. They are looking at a rebalancing of the tax

structure. She is concerned about the future liabilities of the state in the areas of health cost and pensions.

Mr. Schaefer asked about the status of changing the Mansfield Middle School fuel conversion from fossil fuel to another form of energy. Ms. Merrill explained that a bill addressing school construction including green building standards would very likely pass and this change might address the issue.

Senator Williams outlined some of the factors regarding an energy bill. He stated that conservation will be emphasized, especially the exchange of inefficient technology for new technology.

Mr. Hawkins urged support for increased funding for Fire Service Training. Ms. Merrill stated that she recently had a meeting with some of the interested parties and she has some ideas for funding.

Mr. Paulhus requested that the legislators protect Veteran services, as they are often one of the first things that are cut.

The Town Manager questioned the status of the revenues from the Pequot/Mohegan Fund, noting that the town's portion is decreasing. He also asked their position on the conveyance tax. Representative Merrill stated that we have to look at the larger issue for the towns and that an overhaul of the property tax burden might be more helpful. Senator Williams is not in favor of taking away the conveyance tax from the towns.

Ms. Redding asked that the small service agencies be kept in mind. Their operating costs are so great that prevention and outreach programs are being eliminated.

6. Program Sponsorship Signs/Banners in Town Parks

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded, to refer the request from the Mansfield Little League concerning program sponsorship signs/banners in town parks to the Recreation Advisory Committee, to review and to develop a recommendation for the Town Council.

Mr. Paulhus spoke in favor of banners being allowed at Southeast Park from the beginning to the end of the Little League season.

Mr. Haddad spoke against the proposal. He is concerned about allowing private entities to sell space on town property. Ms. Koehn agreed with Mr. Haddad.

Mr. Haddad moved to amend the motion to include referring the matter to the Parks Advisory Committee and the Beautification Committee. Seconded by Mr. Clouette the motion passed

Mr. Hawkins requested that staff distribute copies of the comments from the last time this issue was discussed.

The motion as amended passed.

7. An Ordinance Establishing Property Tax Relief for Certain Elderly Homeowners

Mr. Haddad moved and Ms. Koehn seconded, effective January 22, 2007, to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 p.m. at the Town Council's regular meeting on February 12, 2007, to solicit public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance Establishing Property Tax Relief for Certain Elderly Homeowners.

Kevin Grunwald, Social Services Director, explained that a lien would be put on the property of a qualifying applicant and once the house was sold or transferred the town would be reimbursed with interest. The statute allows towns to place liens on the property and an asset test to be instituted. This draft allows liens but not asset tests.

Mr. Haddad commented that even though without the lien there might be greater participation it would increase the tax burden on everyone else.

Ms. Koehn expressed concern that since the interest is capped at 5% without an asset test to determine real need the program would not be limited and would allow anyone to defer their taxes. The town would not be paid back in real dollars. She would like to see a flexible rate.

Mr. Grunwald noted that the income guidelines include all income that is reported on the Federal Income Tax forms. Assets would be reflected in the income.

Council Members requested that the Assessor be invited to the public hearing.

Dennis O'Brien, Town Attorney, noted that the word "act" should be changed to "ordinance".

Motion so passed.

8. Budget Transfers for FY 2006/2007

Mr. Hawkins moved and Mr. Clouette seconded, effective January 22, 2007, to approve the attached Budget Transfers for FY 2006/07, as presented by the Director of Finance in his correspondence dated January 15, 2007.

Jeffrey Smith, Director of Finance, noted that these changes deal only with changes in salaries and are due to the recent contract settlements with two of the three unions. The increases are commensurate with increases around the state.

Motion so passed.

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

-

-

-

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

-

Ms. Redding, chair of the Committee on Committees, moved the following recommendations:

James Silva to the Building Board of Appeals

Jason Andrew McGarry to the Historic District Commission

Carol Pellegrine to the Commission on Aging

Motion so passed.

Ms. Redding also reported that the Committee reviewed the Assisted/Independent Living Advisory Committee charge and Committee appointments. Work continues on the Volunteer Appreciation Day.

Mayor Paterson announced that she has appointed Ida Millman to the CATV Advisory Board.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Paulhus reported that he and Mr. Hawkins attended the WINCOG legislative breakfast.

Ms. Koehn announced that the Town has received the third solar panel and now has 218 participants in the Clean Energy Program.

Mayor Paterson and Cynthia van Zelm will be going to Washington on Wednesday to speak to our representatives in support of the Downtown Partnership. Mr. Clouette suggested that they try to contact all of the members of the Connecticut Congressional delegation, as these efforts will benefit the entire state.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Attached

The Town Manager announced that on February 11th the Community Center and the Downtown Partnership will hold a Winter Fun Day.

A special budget presentation will be held for Council Members prior to the next Council meeting, starting at 6:00 p.m.

XII. FUTURE AGENDAS

XIII. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

9. International Fire Marshals Association re: NFPA Report Finds Higher Estimated Reliability of Fire Sprinklers and Reaffirms Their Life-Saving Impact, Especially in Homes
- 10.R. Miller re: Storm Water Sampling Report
- 11.State of Connecticut Department of Public Health re: HEARTSafe Community
- 12.State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection re: Town of Mansfield, Canoe Launch
- 13.United State Fire Administration re: Nearly 5,000 Children and Seniors Injured or Killed in Residential Fires in the United States
- 14.C. van Zelm re: September 30, 2006 and December 31, 2006 Progress Reports

for the Downtown Mansfield Revitalization and Enhancement Project

15.VNA East Annual Report

16.VNA East re: First Quarter Statistics

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

-

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Hawkins seconded to move into Executive Session.
Motion so passed.

Issue: Pending Litigation

Potential Open Space Acquisitions

Present: Clouette, Haddad, Hawkins, Koehn, Paterson, Paulhus, Redding, Schaefer

Also Present: Matthew Hart, Maria Capriola, Dennis O'Brien

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting
Motion so passed.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk